



Southeastern US Ohara

A Chapter of the Ohara School of Ikebana

The Spirit of Gratitude: Honoring Our Members' Contributions!

By [Karen LaFleur-Stewart](#), President

As we approach the November week to remind ourselves of our good fortune - past and present, it is a time to also be thankful for SEO members.

SEO members who attend our seminars do SO much more than pay their registration and show up for class - way, way more!!! Members - sometimes teaming with their equally generous, big-hearted spouses - shuttle buckets (and other gear) to and from the seminar site, to and from the storage place, set up tables, move furniture, rearrange the room, put out place cards, name tags and handouts, unpack large florists' boxes, wash, cut and carefully prepare some 500 - 600 stems of plants, haul heavy buckets, check the audio equipment, transport - in addition to their own containers - containers for the sensei and for members who travel by plane, wash and dry flower buckets, haul out/in large floral boxes, put on tablecloths, set up backdrops and photo-taking booths, distribute plant materials during lessons, host the sensei in their homes, and even serve as chauffeur for the sensei.

After the last seminar lesson, uncomplainingly this cadre reverses set up as they pack up, tear down tables, sweep, mop, haul out trash, fill cars with dried, stacked, and bagged buckets and head home, on trips that in many instances require a night on the road to break up a long drive.

Continued

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SEO members do all that without whining, grumbling, or complaining, and without expecting anyone to even thank them!! What an amazing collection of volunteer artists you are!!!

I am deeply thankful for ALL of you who are making it possible for SEOs to have six lessons at seminars. What bounty, what teaming, what generosity, what self-less ness is packaged in each of you. Only because of your thoughtfulness, SEOs can attend seminars and learn more of the nuances and beauty of ikebana.

In profound gratitude for your contributions to this lovely, ephemeral, fragile art.

*Autumn winds
whisper,
Grateful hearts weave
threads of gold,
Kindness blooms
anew.*

[Karen LaFleur-Stewart](#)
President



Honoring Our 2024 Board: With Gratitude for Their Service

As we gather in the spirit of gratitude this Thanksgiving week, we want to extend our heartfelt thanks to our 2024 board members: [Fay Charlesworth](#), [Karen LaFleur Stewart](#), [Beth Bower-Klaine](#), [Alice Buch](#), and [Marjorie Davanzo](#). Their dedication, leadership, and countless hours of service have guided our chapter through another year of growth, learning, and connection.

In Japanese culture, gratitude is often expressed with the word "*kansha*" (感謝)," a deep appreciation for kindness and contributions. This board exemplifies *kansha* through their tireless efforts to make our seminars and activities meaningful and impactful for all members.

As we bid farewell to their tenure, we are deeply thankful for their generosity and devotion. Their work has laid a strong foundation for the incoming 2025 board to continue leading us forward in preserving and celebrating the beauty of Ohara Ikebana.



Summer Seminar Highlights with José Salcedo **Sub Grand Master**

José Salcedo is a distinguished 1st Term Master of the Ohara School of Ikebana, with a rich background in Japanese floral art. He began his ikebana journey in February 1988 with the Ikenobo School and started teaching Ikenobo at East Los Angeles College in 1996. In December 1988, he expanded his expertise by studying under Mrs. Kawamura in the Ohara School, and by 1998, he was teaching Ohara Ikebana at her studio. His dedication led to the attainment of the First Term Master Ohara Certificate in June 2015. In 2022, he was recognized as Sun Grand Master.

Beyond his teaching roles, Mr. Salcedo has been an active member of the ikebana community, serving as President of Ikebana International Los Angeles Chapter No. 4 and the Ikenobo Ikebana Society of Los Angeles. He has also demonstrated his artistry at various events, including the 18th North & Central American Region Conference in 2019.

A retired NASA software engineer, Mr. Salcedo's unique blend of technical precision and artistic expression has made him a respected figure in the world of ikebana.



*In the art of ikebana, every stem is a teacher,
every flower a lesson,
and every arrangement a journey toward understanding.*

Summer Seminar 2024

Lesson Details

Lesson 1
Thursday, August 29, Morning

Hana-isho Inclining Form

[Third Term Master & Above]

Japanese Maple, Coxcomb, Pom Pom Mum, Limonium



Hana-isho Inclining Form

[Introductory to Fourth Term Master]

Ti Leaves, Anthurium, Solidago



Lesson 2
Thursday, August 29, Afternoon

Heika "Free Expression"

[Third Term Master & Above]

Magnolia, Lily



Heika Cascading Style

[Introductory to Fourth Term Master]

Liatris (Mini Gladiolus), Rose "Sweet Eskimo"



Lesson 3
Friday, August 30, Morning

Traditional Landscape, Multi-Variety for Summer
[Third Term Master & Above]
Azalea, Solomon's Seal, Lily, Dianthus, Campanula



Moribana Slanting Style
[Introductory to Fourth Term Master]
Azalea, Disbud Cremon, Leather Fern



Lesson 4
Friday, August 30, Afternoon

Traditional Landscape, Multi-Variety for Summer
[Third Term Master & Above]
Azalea, Coxcomb, September Aster, Solidago, Umbrella Fern, Miscanthus



Moribana Slanting Style
[Introductory to Fourth Term Master]
Azalea, Thistle, Ming Fern



Lesson 5
Saturday, August 31, Morning

Rimpa-cho
[Third Term Master & Above]
Coxcomb, Chrysanthemum, September Aster, Lily Grass, Leather Fern



Advanced Hana-isho One Row Form
[Introductory to Fourth Term Master]
Coxcomb, Chrysanthemum, September Aster, Leather Fern



Lesson 6
Saturday, August 31, Morning

Free Expression

*Curly Willow, Horsetail (Equisetum), Monstera
Leaves, Daisy Mums, Lisianthis*



*Leaves drift gently down,
quiet lessons from the branch—
nature's silent gift.*



Welcoming the 2025 Board: Leading Us Forward

We are thrilled to announce the 2025 SEO Board, who will guide our chapter into an exciting new year of growth and creativity. From left to right: [Karen LaFleur Stewart](#) (President), [Helen Dowling](#) (Vice President), [Carol Malott](#) (Treasurer), and [Beth Bower-Klaine](#) (Past President). Not pictured: [Marty Jones](#) (Secretary).

Their combined experience, dedication, and passion for Ikebana ensure that we are in excellent hands as we continue to learn, grow, and celebrate the beauty of Ohara Ikebana together. Please join us in congratulating and supporting our 2025 board as they take on their new roles!



Spring into Ikebana: SEO's March Seminar in [Greer, SC](#)

The first seminar of **2025** will be held in **March 18-20** in **Greer, SC**. We are delighted that Sub Grand Master José Salcedo will be traveling west to guide our ikebana studies. Although our seminar will take place in Greer, you might consider arriving early or staying over to visit tourist destination Greenville, SC.

The SEO seminar will be held in a small town, one that is not much larger than Highlands. Greer, SC is a small community - about 40,000 residents - located mid-way between Charlotte, NC and Atlanta, GA beside I-85. Just outside Greer is the jetport ([GSP](#)) served by major airlines - Allegiant, American, Delta, Southwest, and United.

With the arrival of a [BMW manufacturing plant](#), Greer went from sleepy to flourishing. The small busy downtown is walkable. Shops and stores are intermingled with assorted local restaurants and a small food hall. A three-year-old Hampton Inn is located beside Main Street; it is adjacent to the Cannon Center, our SEO venue. All these locations are easily reached on foot.



Destination town [Greenville](#), cited on too many lists of "The Best Place to..." is 25-30 minutes drive from Greer. From a downtown with an extensive and diverse array of restaurants (from the modest to expensive), the Main Street is lined with a mixture of unusual, locally owned shops and food flavors. Greenville has at its center an outstanding civic park, Falls Park, that is nestled on the Reedy River and crossed by a spectacular suspension bridge.

A 28-mile trail - [The Swamp Rabbit Trail](#) - originates in Greenville, downtown linking city parks and heading north. For walking and biking the trail meanders north - sometimes on parts of abandoned railway routes - to Travelers Rest. Small businesses sprouted along the route offering weary bikers or walkers refreshment and food.





A New Home for SEO!

With deep regret, SEO acknowledges the end of an era. Highlands, our beloved seminar home, once offered everything we needed: a wonderful venue, local members with homes nearby, a superb floral supplier, a local business that provided containers and kenzans, and even a resident teacher. It was the perfect blend of convenience and charm.

However, times have changed. The store closed, members moved away, restaurants grew too busy and less accommodating, and lodging and food costs rose steeply. The lack of an airport made travel difficult, and the curvy, mountainous roads became a deterrent. While we cherish the memories made in Highlands, SEO must look to the future and find a new place to call home for our seminars.

This year, we are testing Greer, which meets most of our needs except affordability. We have also tested Arlington and plan to return. Looking ahead, we hope to host a seminar in Charlotte in 2026. But we need your help to find the next perfect location!

What We're Looking For:

Location

- A Mid-Atlantic state (between VA and FL)
- Easy access via major highways and proximity to a jetport
- A local floral wholesaler
- A variety of restaurants
- Comfortable lodging options
- Entertainment options nearby for spouses and guests

Venue Features

- Affordable
- Adjacent parking (about 15 spaces)
- Easy access for unloading floral boxes and ikebana containers & supplies
- At least 10 large, movable tables plus 3 additional tables for teaching and displays
- Lockable overnight security for our supplies
- Good lighting
- Bathrooms
- Dumpsters and carts to move garbage to the dumpsters (if necessary)
- Two large commercial sinks and stainless-steel tables
- Overnight security (i.e., lockable, no need for a guard)
- Bonus points for venues with electronics and screens for demonstrations

Once We Find a New Home, We'll Need:

Storage Space

- Temporary storage (size of a large walk-in closet) for our seminar supplies, with potential for long-term rental options.

A Volunteer Seminar Chair

- Someone passionate about organizing and leading the way.

If you know of a location that checks these boxes, please let an SEO officer know! Together, we can honor our history while building an exciting future for our seminars.

Upcoming Ikebana Events

March 18-20, 2025

(Setup March 17)

The Cannon Center, Greer, SC

[Southeastern Ohara Chapter](#)

Early Spring Seminar 2025

José Salcedo, Sub Grand Master

April 20-22, 2025

Osaka, Japan

Ohara World Seminar

April 25-28, 2025

Kyoto, Japan

[Ikebana International World Convention](#)

Sept. 8-12, 2025

Portland, OR

[North American Ohara Teachers Association](#)

Minor Conference

November 6-8, 2025

(Setup November 5)

Arlington, VA

[Southeastern Ohara Chapter](#)

Late Fall Seminar 2025

Ingrid Lüders, Grand Master

Seminar Co Chairs Yuko Wain & Helen Dowling

Labor Thanksgiving Day: A Celebration of Gratitude in Japan

While Japan doesn't celebrate Thanksgiving as we know it in the West, the country has its own holiday dedicated to giving thanks. **Labor Thanksgiving Day** (勤労感謝の日, **Kinrō Kansha no Hi**) is celebrated annually on November 23rd. This public holiday honors the hard work and contributions of workers while fostering a spirit of gratitude for the blessings of the harvest.



Labor Thanksgiving Day traces its roots to an ancient Shinto festival called **Niname-sai**, where the Emperor would offer the first rice harvest of the year to the gods in a ceremony expressing gratitude for the year's bounty. Over time, the holiday evolved into a day of appreciation for labor and production, emphasizing the value of mutual respect in society.

Modern celebrations include community events, school activities where children express thanks to local workers, and moments of reflection on the importance of harmony between people and nature. Though not a feast-filled day like Western Thanksgiving, Kinrō Kansha no Hi reminds us that gratitude transcends cultural boundaries, taking on unique forms in different parts of the world.